

REPLACED BY
ART 34 AMDT

Claims

1. A method of negotiating the sharing of a cost associated with a communication service between a plurality of participants, the method comprising:
 - 5 sending a cost sharing request from a terminal used by a first of the participants to terminals used by the or each other participant; and
at the or each terminal receiving said request, processing the request using predefined cost sharing rules and/or receiving user inputs relating to the request, and notifying the first participant's terminal of the result,
 - 10 the network(s) supporting the service being informed of the negotiated cost sharing formula, and the participants being charged by the network(s) in accordance with the formula.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the cost sharing request is sent from
15 either a terminal initiating a service, or from a terminal which has received a service initiation request from another terminal.
3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the terminal receiving a cost sharing request returns a response to the sending terminal accepting a cost sharing
20 proposal contained or identified in the request.
4. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the receiving terminal sends a response to the sending terminal, proposing an alternative or modified cost sharing
25 proposal.
5. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein three or more participants are invited to join the service, the terminal sending the request coordinating received responses and finalising the cost sharing arrangement.
- 30 6. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the cost sharing procedure is performed prior to the initiation of the communication service, upon initiation, during a service, or after a service has been terminated.

7. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the network supporting the service and connecting the participating terminals comprises a 3GPP IP Multimedia Subsystem.

5 8. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the terminal-to-terminal signalling protocol is the Session Initiation Protocol, SIP.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein messages exchanged between the participating terminals are intercepted at one or more SIP servers for the purpose of
10 charging subscribers.

10. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the network(s) supporting the service are informed of the negotiated cost sharing formula by intercepting the messages exchanged between the participating terminals within the
15 network(s).

11. A communication terminal comprising:
transmission means for exchanging user and signalling data with one or more peer terminals via a communications network;
20 means coupled to said transmission means for receiving and sending cost sharing requests to and from peer terminals, the cost sharing requests relating to a communication service involving the terminals;
means for implementing a set of cost sharing rules following the sending or receipt of a cost sharing proposal in order to agree upon a cost sharing arrangement.

25 12. A terminal according to claim 11, the terminal being a mobile wireless terminal.

13. A Session Initiation Protocol server for use in an IP Multimedia Core Network Subsystem of a communications system, the server comprising:
30 means for causing Session Initiation Protocol signalling, associated with a cost sharing negotiation between two or more user terminals coupled to the system, to be diverted through the server; and

means for extracting agreed cost sharing data from the diverted signalling, and for either allocating costs to one or more of the terminal users in accordance with this

data, or for providing information to another system node to allow that node to allocate costs.